DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 022 087 AC 002 418

By-Ohliger, John
BEACONS TO THE FUTURE.
Pub Date 68
Note-16p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.72
Descriptors-*BIOGRAPHIES, *BROADCAST INDUSTRY, *ETHICAL VALUES, INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS, MORAL VALUES, POLITICAL ISSUES, RESPONSIBILITY, *STUDENT ENROLLMENT, UNIVERSITIES
Identifiers-Edward R. Murrow, George V. Denny, Lyman Bryson

From the point of view that broadcasting is turning toward social responsibility and social ethic, it becomes the duty of university departments preparing personnel for the broadcasting field to select students potentially qualified to contribute in addition to technical capability "that extra something" denoting real ethical quality. This article is devoted to definition of "that extra something" through example of the lives of three men who possessed it--Lyman Bryson (1888-1959), George V. Denny (1890-1959), and Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965). All three were educators before they became broadcasters. All moved broadcasting toward reaching its potential as a medium for popular education in political, social, and cultural issues. Their lives touched all three networks, all areas of programing, and most of the central issues of the past 40 years. All failed to some degree in their specific attempts to accomplish what they wished for broadcasting, but successfully set down patterns which others fulfilled. The force of their lives should stand as prototypes in the years ahead. (rt)

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BEACONS TO THE FUTURE

John Ohliger
Assistant Professor of Adult Education
Ohio State University
363 Arps Hall
293-2720

ED022087

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INTRODUCTION

Departments of universities preparing personnel for the field of broadcasting face many problems. One of the more serious problems revolves around the nature of the student to be educated. Such questions arise as: What attitudes should the student be helped to develop? What type of student should be given more encouragement than others? What is the general future of the field into which the student will be required to fit? What should he focus on preparing for?

The latter questions have been the subject of much thought by many broadcasting educators. The most cogent response has come from Wilbur Schramm in his seminal work Responsibility in Mass Communication. There Schramm expresses the belief that broadcasting as one of the mass media is "turning away from individualism toward social responsibility, from rationalism toward a social and religious ethic."

Given Schramm's point of view the larger questions for university departments to consider fall into clearer focus. It becomes the duty of the departments to find and educate human resources that will help the entire field of broadcasting, whether it be educational, commercial, CATV, or other, to serve the social responsibility function.

The problem is not so much one of preparing people technically to do the job. With the excellent facilities at the universities' disposal it is not difficult to produce qualified personnel. The real problem is to encourage qualified or potentially qualified men and women who will also contribute that extra something in the ethical dimension. If such men and women get into the broadcasting stream it is more likely that the audience

for worthwhile programs will increase and that broadcasting will be propelled into community and political controversies on a really meaningful level.

It is impossible to define "that extra something" denoting real ethical quality. This article is devoted to definition through example. The lives of three men who possessed that indefinable quality will be carefully examined.

Lyman Bryson, George V. Denny, and Edward R. Murrow were all educators before they became broadcasters. Their lives intermingled as they each moved broadcasting toward reaching its potential as a medium for, among other things, popular education in political, social, and cultural issues. Their lives touched all three networks, all areas of programming, and most of the central issues of the past forty years. Between them they received, several times over, just about every award presented by broadcasters, educators, and other interested groups. If a list of men who contributed the most toward the improvement of broadcasting were compiled there is little doubt that these three men would top the nominations of almost every expert and critic in the field.

LYMAN BRYSON (1888-1959)

Of the three, Bryson's experience in broadcasting extended the longest. But, of the three, he had the most concurrent interests outside of broadcasting. As the senior of the three sometime colleagues he was to some slight extent responsible for the success and direction of the other two.

Bryson was born in Nebraska and raised there through the first decade of the twentieth century. He followed graduation from the University of Michigan with three years as a newspaper reporter. Then he returned to the university to teach journalism and rhetoric until the first world war.

There followed a brief stint as a civilian employee of the U.S. Army. He then worked for the Red Cross until the mid-twenties at various tasks including investigating social conditions all over the world in the interest of international philanthropy. From the mid-twenties through the mid-thirties he worked and taught in California and Iowa developing professional competence in anthropology as Director of the San Diego Museum, in discussion leadership through his work organizing discussion groups for the California Association for Adult Education, and as a forum leader in the famed Des Moines Public Forums.

His major contact with broadcasting began after he arrived in New York to become a professor in Columbia University's Teacher College, a position he held until he died. He had been broadcasting intermittently on public affairs since 1927. But in 1935 he became deeply involved in the field as an advisor to George V. Denny when Denny started the forum program AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR on the National Broadcasting Company.

In 1938 the Columbia Broadcasting System created an advisory Adult Education Board composed principally of university executives. Bryson became the first and only Chairman of the advisory board. From 1938 until his death Bryson helped CBS chart its course in educational broadcasting.

In 1942 the CBS Adult Education Board died of inanition and the incumbant Director of Education at CBS was let out. Bryson was asked to fill that position. He resigned as Director of Education in 1945 to devote more time to such less arduous tasks at CBS as advising Edward R. Murrow and moderating a number of radio discussion programs.

Of the many programs he was associated with as supervisor, producer, consultant, or moderator perhaps the best known was INVITATION TO LEARNING - a series devoted to the popular discussion of great books. The program

was the recipient of many awards. It enjoyed its greatest success when Bryson moderated it, as he did from 1947 until almost the end of his life. He died of cancer in 1959 at the age of 71.

During his lifetime as teacher and broadcaster he also found time to write, edit, or contribute to over eighty books. In addition ninety of his articles were published in periodicals ranging from the Readers' Digest to the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. The five honorary doctorates he received were awarded mainly for his work as a broadcaster, moderator of discussions, and teacher.

The direction and meaning of Bryson's life is best expressed in his own words. He was an "incorrigible pedagogue" who had a "very deep implicit faith in the power of beautiful words to coerce somehow the social good." His dedication to the value of popular education and the democratic society was founded on a belief that "most really great ideas can be grasped by anyone who pays attention to what is said about them." In addition he had a strong respect for power without the desire to possess it.

Bryson tried to apply these beliefs to broadcasting while at the same time remaining realistically aware of the limitations of its commercial control. His highest expectation for broadcasting was expressed this way in 1932:

> We expect commercial broadcasting to experiment constantly with raising the standards of their own programs in order to raise the standards by which they are judged. That is exactly what we have a right to expect.

But nineteen years later he had to admit the failure of even this expectation and of his own efforts in broadcasting when he said in his reminiscences:

> The great failure of all the popular media ...

> is that they have not provided enough opportunity for people to expand their tastes upward. We haven't given people access to better things in many a phase of culture to which they would have responded.

Unlike the other two men treated here, however, he had a clear eyed personal view of why his expectation failed, unsullied by bitterness or disillusionment. Bryson noted simply that:

> Most noble ideas are defeated by the combination of the ineptitude and insincerity of those who argue for them as one element and the pragmatic indifference of people in power as the other.

GEORGE V. DENNY (1899-1959)

Lyman Bryson was known for the variety of his contributions to broadcasting. In contrast, George V. Denny's acclaim as a broadcaster was built on the effect of a single radio and television series - AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR.

Denny was eleven years younger than Bryson. He was born and raised in North Carolina. After graduating from the University of North Carolina he taught dramatic production there for two years. In the mid-twenties Denny tried his hand at becoming a professional actor in New York. He appeared in four Broadway productions. His most notable success was as the only white performer in the Pulitzer prize winning play In Abraham's Bosum. Seeking greater financial security he became a manager of a lecture bureau. Then for two years he was director of the Columbia University Institute of Arts and Sciences, an adult education branch of the university.

In 1930 Denny joined an independent non-profit adult education organization which he was to stay with for twenty-two years - The League for Political Education. The League was a highly respected organization founded by a group of wealthy suffragettes in 1894. It sponsored a number of political forums, lectures, and cultural events in New York, all held in the building it constructed - The Town Hall. When Denny became President

of the organization in 1938 he changed the name of the League to The Town Hall, Inc.

In 1935 Denny delivered a radio address calling for a nationwide program of nonpartisan political education. Through connections on the League's powerful Board of Trustees, Denny received an offer from the head of the National Broadcasting Company for the League to put on an experimental series of programs to test his proposal.

The first program, which combined aspects of the forum, debate, round-table discussion, and audience questioning, was on the subject "Which Way America - Fascism, Communism, Socialism, or Democracy?" Proponents of each position spoke, asked, and answered questions. AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR was an immediate success. Over three-thousand fan letter were received within forty-eight hours. NBC immediately signed up for a continuing series of programs.

In the role of moderator of the program Denny was the focus of great attention and acclaim. Readers' Digest said Denny was responsible for "America's premier program [which gives] a radio public weaned on soothing syrup its first taste of raw meat. Literary Digest called it a "smash" and "tremendously popular." Newspapers fell all over each other to give him publicity. In a typical year over one-hundred and fifty editorials appeared praising the program and Denny. The program lasted until 1956 and was heard or seen over nine-hundred times. It was the recipient of over fifty national awards. It was the first series to receive two Peabody awards.

TOWN MEETING propelled Denny into the national political arena. He had intimate contacts with most of the powerful political figures of the thirties and forties. Educators and educational broadcasters were almost unanimously enthusiastic. Denny spoke at scores of educational conventions and conferences.

He often put on special performances of TOWN MEETING for these affairs. Most would have agreed with Franklin Dunham, of the U.S. Office of Education, when he told a conference of broadcasters that TOWN MEETING was the first radio program to reach a nationwide audience with material the general audience could understand "in the stimulating context of conflict and controversy."

Looking back at the heyday of the program, Robert Saudek, who was a network liaison representative to the series at one time and is now known as the producer of OMNIBUS and PROFILES IN COURAGE, wrote in a letter recently that:

> In looking back to the 1930's and 1940's I must say that the program AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR did represent a genuine and effective voice in those extraordinary times. ...
>
> Furthermore, I believe the series attracted more national attention over a longer period of time than perhaps any such program does today.
>
> I believe it had almost as much to do with the nation's political decisions as the televising of the Kennedy/Nixon debates had to do with the national decisions two decades later.

For as yet unexplained reasons, as the fifties approached the program began to slip from the pinnacle of national interest it held in the thirties and forties. Meanwhile Denny himself was in great trouble with the Board of Trustees of Town Hall. The Board finally asked him to leave in 1952.

The reasons for dropping Denny from Town Hall are also not completely explained. A number of interviews and an exchange of letters with persons involved have produced conflicting statements. One said that "the financial attractions offered him by the radio networks caused him to be rather difficult to deal with." Another said that "his only problem was the jealousy of the Board of Trustees because the national spotlight was on Denny and not on the Town Hall." Still another felt it was "office politics."

At any rate, Denny was dropped in 1952. TOWN MEETING limped along

without him, expiring in the general radio cutback of 1956 while television, on which the series had never been successful, surged ahead. Denny was unable to get another network program for himself and, according to his son, felt that the networks had "blackballed" him. Norman Cousins, the editor of Saturday Review who appeared on the series many times, said in a letter that:

> [Denny] never recovered from the separation from TOWN MEETING. It had permeated almost every aspect of his life. His living quarters were in the Town Hall building. He had married his secretary at the Town Hall. When, therefore, he was ousted, his physical and emotional deterioration became visible, especially to his intimate friends.

George V. Denny died from a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 60 on November 11, 1959 - thirteen days before Lyman Bryson passed away.

EDWARD R. MURROW (1908-1965)

Edward R. Murrow, the youngest of the three, became by far the most influential, the best known, the highest paid, and the most honored. Yet, like the other two, he admitted defeat toward the end of his life in his drive to raise broadcasting's commitment to social responsibility.

He was born Egbert Roscoe Murrow in 1908, nine years after Denny's birth. Murrow was born in a county of the same state near where Denny was born - North Carolina. In 1914 Murrow moved with his family to the state of Washington. Later he attended Washington State College, where he changed his first name to Edward. Like Denny, he performed as an actor in his younger days, though he never tried to make a living at it.

After graduation from college in 1930, Murrow served for two years as President of the National Student Federation, with an office in New York City. In that capacity he arranged student tours of Europe. In collaboration with Chester Williams, later a prominent adult educator, Murrow conducted a series of international broadcasts on CBS Radio featuring such world leaders as Gandhi, Hindenburg, and Einstein along with a number of American leaders

in foreign affairs.

Murrow's formal employment with CBS didn't begin until 1935, after a three year stint with the Institute of International Education. His primary job with the Institute was bringing displaced European professors to American universities.

He started his twenty-five years of service with CBS in 1935 as Director of Talks and Special Events. Murrow took this job only after he had accepted the presidency of Rockford College in Illinois and had then been turned down when the college discovered his age. He was twenty-six years old at the time.

As CBS Director of Talks and Special Events it was his responsibility to supervise educational programs dealing with political and scientific subjects, address groups on the potential of radio as a medium for education, and act as liaison with the U.S. Office of Education, which was then instituting a series of broadcasts over commercial networks. In this liaison capacity Murrow was partially responsible for setting in motion a series of over seven hundred Office of Education programs, broadcast over CBS and NBC before the beginning of the second world war, involving donations of three and half million dollars worth of network time.

In 1937 Murrow was promoted to a CBS position in Europe where he arranged various cultural broadcasts. It was in Europe in 1938 that Murrow began making his broadcasts as a foreign correspondent that brought him international fame, credit or blame for helping to prepare the people of the United States for the second world war, and national honors from the governments of Britain and France. His most well known broadcasts were delivered from London during the blitz.

After his great success as a war reporter, Murrow returned to the United States in 1946 to become Executive Vice President of CBS in charge

of news and public affairs. Within a year he resigned from that position because, as the New York Times put it, "he soon found executive tasks - in and out baskets, memos, conferences, and the rest - wearisome." Later Murrow said, "I wanted the dignity and satisfaction of being a reporter again."

And a reporter he became, starting the program EDWARD R. MURROW AND THE NEWS, which appeared every weekday evening for the next thirteen years - until 1959, just before he left CBS. Quickly he became the highest paid newscaster on radio. Soon his pay skyrocketed to three hundred thousand dollars a year when he became the only major radio news personality to make a full successful switch to television.

By the early fifties he was riding high. He began to co-produce and narrate a weekly series of CBS television documentaries, SEE IT NOW, sponsored by Alcoa Aluminum. Without so much as a by-your-leave to the network or the sponsor, Murrow took on such political giants as the American Legion, the Defense Department, and even Senator Joseph McCarthy. Several commentators credit Murrow with starting McCarthy on his downward path. Murrow also conducted the popular PERSON TO PERSON, the fluffy but profitable show which took viewers into the homes of the famous. For these and other efforts he received over seventy national awards including four Peabodys and eight honorary doctorates.

But by 1956 the wheels began to turn the other way. By 1958 it was all over. By 1961 he was out of CBS. By 1965, at the age of 57, he was dead of cancer and the Rector of St. James Episcopal Church in New York was praying over his body:

> Through an era when political tyranny and financial pressures were constantly threatening to enslave human consciences, we praise Thee for the high example of [Edward R. Murrow's] integrity and freedom of the spirit, for he reported the thing as he saw it — for the God of things as they are.

No one has yet told the full story of the defeat of Edward R. Murrow within CBS. But from a number of obituaries in Time, Newsweek, The New York Times, and The Saturday Review; from a bitter speech which Murrow delivered in late 1958; and from some simple deductions from other published facts, it is possible to piece together the following speculative account.

Consider this chronological litany of facts, opinions, and educated guesses. In a biting column called "Murrow's Lost Fight" written a few days after Murrow's death, Robert Lewis Shayon of The Saturday Review states flatly that "the broadcasting idealism that Murrow represented died many years ago, even before he left CBS." Shayon comments that as far back as 1947 when Murrow gave up his executive position to become a reporter again "there is evidence that he already had seen the true outlines of the opposing forces in broadcasting."

However, also in 1947, Murrow became a member of the CBS governing Board of Directors, a position which he held until 1956. Perhaps partly because of his board position, Murrow occupied a unique place of practically autonomous control over his work, as his star rose in the early fifties. His major sponsor, Alcoa Aluminum, never knew the content of any of the SEE IT NOW programs in advance and rarely even knew the topic. And Murrow did not clear any of his work with anyone over his head in the network heirarchy. The New York Times quotes an unidentified writer this way:

> Mr. Murrow has achieved a position at CBS that is outside, and basically antithetical to the corporate structure of authority and he thereby enjoys a large measure of freedom from authority of all kinds.

The Times added that Murrow "ran his own news island within the network for many years."

But things began to go the other way at the end of the 1954-1955 television season. First, Alcoa cancelled its sponsorship of SEE IT NOW,

ostensibly because of a change in marketing policy. Then, Murrow was all of a sudden no longer a member of the CBS Board of Directors.

About this time Murrow is quoted as saying:

> They come to me, the [CBS] vice presidents, and say "Look, there's so much going out this apout and only so much coming in." And I say, "If that's the way you want to do it, you'd better get yourselves another boy."

Apparantly CBS did get "another boy," twenty-eight of them in fact, because the network soon set up a twenty-eight man committee to pass on all news programs. Murrow's autonomy and authority went out the window.

By 1958 SEE IT NOW was off the air. In the fall of 1958 Murrow delivered a scathing speech to a meeting of the Radio and Television News Directors' Association. During this speech he said the programming of the networks showed "decadence, escapism, and insulation from the realities of the world in which we live." Murrow declared:

> We shall pay for using this most powerful instrument of communication to insulate the citizenry from the hard and demanding realities which must be faced if we are to survive. I mean the word "survive" literally. If there were to be a competition in indifference, or perhaps insulation from reality, then Nero and his fiddle, Chamberlain and his umbrella, could not find a place on an early afternoon sustaining show.

But more significant than the bitterness of his attack on commercial broadcasting in general is what can be gleaned from between the lines of this speech to indicate who he thought was responsible for his downfall at CBS.

First, he did not blame William Paley, the Chairman of the CBS Board of Directors. In his speech Murrow stated flatly:

> Let us not shoot the wrong piano player. Do not be deluded into believing that the titular heads of the networks control what appears on their networks. They all have better taste.

In addition, for many years Murrow had a clause in his contract which

would permit him to quit if Paley were ever removed as the actual head of the network. Murrow owed a great deal of his rise within the network to Paley's protection. In turn Paley was dependent on Murrow. "A man familiar with the workings of the company" is quoted in a New Yorker profile of Murrow as saying:

> Bill Paley's got a conscience, and he cares about more than just making money. But in radio [and TV] you've got to make money before you can do anything else, and most of the brass at CBS thinks in terms of profit, which on the air means entertainment. Bill needs Ed to remind him to think in terms of news. Well, it's a little bigger than that - let's call it responsibility. In that sense, you might say that Ed is Bill's conscience.

So Murrow made it possible for Paley to feel that he was fulfilling broadcasting's function in the area of social responsibility. No, Murrow did not blame Paley. As he said in his 1958 speech, he placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of "the twenty or thirty corporations which dominate radio and television," the corporations which purchase the bulk of the air time for advertising.

Now, one more piece in this jig saw puzzle. At one point in his 1958 speech Murrow referred to a time "when the fear of a slight reduction in business [resulted in] an immediate cutback in bodies in the News and Public Affairs Department, at a time when network profits had just reached an all-time high."

Here is one speculative conclusive from the above. One factor in Murrow's downfall is the possibility that the heads of the large corporations with the biggest advertising budgets on CBS put irresistable pressure on Paley to curtail Murrow's freedom by threatening to withdraw some business. Apparently Paley was somehow forced to yield, even though network profits had hit an all-time high.

This is far from a complete explanation of Murrow's fall from grace. Even Murrow's close colleague, Fred Friendly, appears confused about the chain of causes in his lengthy description of the sad events in his recent book, Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control. For example, referring particularly to the question of the demise of SEE IT NOW, Friendly writes:

> Jack Gould, who knows as much about television and CBS as any person in or out of it, called me after he had written his last SEE IT NOW review...and said "Sometime you and Murrow are going to have to tell me the real story of why SEE IT NOW was killed." I never have, because to this day I am not entirely certain, other than it died of what doctors sometimes call "massive complications."...For years afterward Ed [Murrow] would say, "There is still some missing part. I still don't know why the show was killed."

Within a year after Murrow's 1958 speech, he had requested a leave of absence from CBS to take a trip around the world. By 1961, he had resigned to head the United States Information Agency under President Kennedy. He held that position for less than two years when cancer struck him down.

Years before, the television critic John Crosby had dubbed Edward R. Murrow "The St. George of Television." But in Murrow's last and crucial fight, the dragon won.

CONCLUSION - THE LESSON OF THREE LIVES

The most conclusive comment about the lives of Bryson, Denny, and Murrow is probably that they were all born too soon. But if Schramm is right that broadcasting is moving toward more social responsibility, then these men could well stand as beacons to the future.

It behooves those who are concerned with the future of broadcasting to ponder well the careers of Bryson, Denny, and Murrow. Is it asking too much for university broadcasting departments to offer to new entrants into the field the lives of these men as examples to be followed? If their lives should become models for the future then it will be just to say that indeed they did not fail in their attempts but were instead the most successful of

men - men who set down the patterns which others fulfilled.

Who knows, if the force of their lives should stand as prototypes to the years ahead, then someday all of broadcasting may be hailed in the same way Edward R. Murrow was when he received an honorary doctorate from Oberlin College:

> His talent and his knowledge have been devoted to the goals which all true education seeks. He has worked constantly to inform men's minds, to liberate their judgements, and to sharpen their awareness of the responsibilities which citizens of a republic can never abdicate. ...
>
> The cause of democracy and the cause of education are alike well served by one who advances evidence against epithet, clarity against confusion, objectivity against obsession, and frank discussion against the dullness of fear.

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